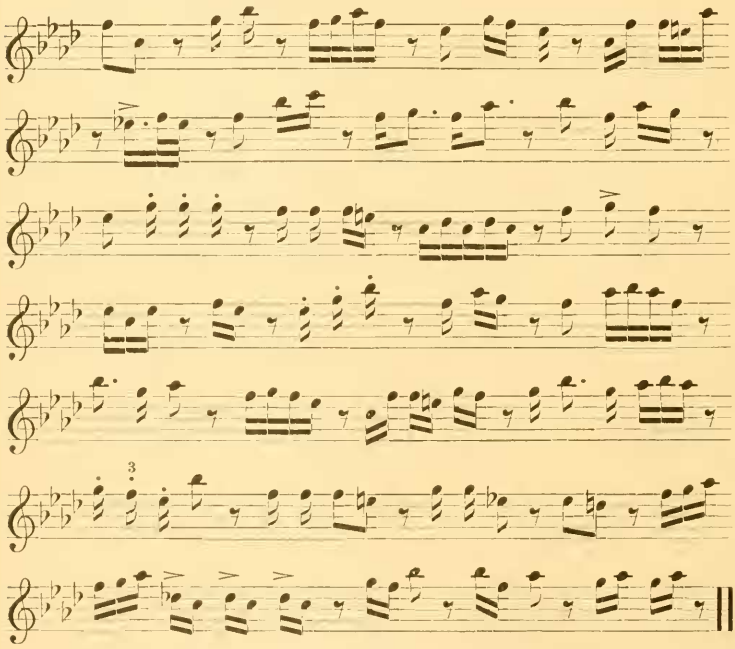
SOME BIRD SONGS.

BY SIMEON PEASE CHENEY.

CATBIRD.

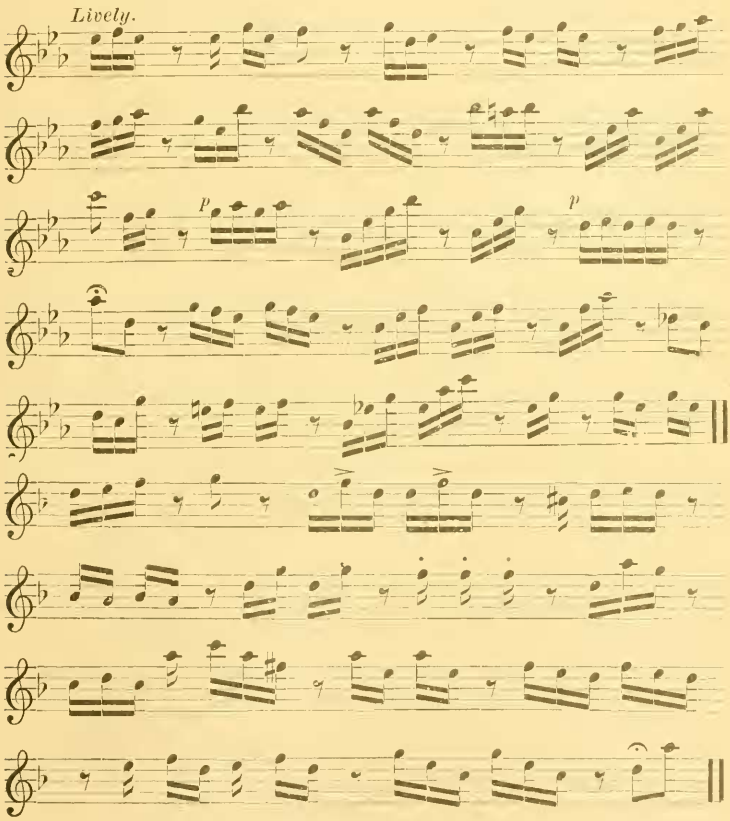
With something of the style of the Brown Thrush, the Catbird is not his equal in song. He is generally considered a mocking-bird, and does make use of the notes of different birds, delivering them in snatchy, disconnected fashion. It is easy to trace in the Catbird's singing the notes of the Red-eyed Vireo, the Brown Thrasher, Bluebird, Robin, and Yellow-breasted Chat. His performance on the whole is very interesting, given, as it is, in a lively manner, with an occasional tone truly sweet and musical. Much of his singing, however, is mere twitter, often little more than a succession of squeaks, too antic to be put on paper.



BROWN THRUSH; BROWN THRASHER.

Despite a lack of quality in tone, the Thrasher is one of the favorites; his fame is assured. In exuberance and peculiarity

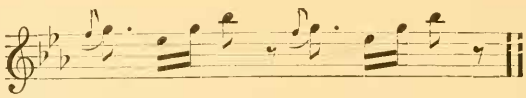
of performance he is unsurpassed, unless it be by the Catbird. While prone to the conversational style, he is capable of splendid inspiration. On a fine morning in June, when he rises to the branch of a wayside tree, or to the top of a bush at the edge of the pasture, the first eccentric accent compels us to admit that the spirit of song has fast hold on him. As the fervor increases, his long and elegant tail droops, his whole plumage is loosened and trembling, his head is raised, and his bill is wide open; there is no mistake, it is the power of the god. No pen can report him now; we must wait till the frenzy passes. Then we may catch such fragments as these:



WHIPPOORWILL.

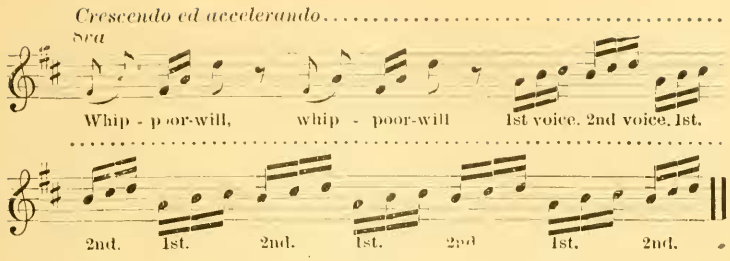
No bird in New England is more readily known by his song

than is the Whippoorwill. In the courageous repetition of his name he accents the first and last syllables, the last most; always measuring his song with the same rhythm, while very considerably varying the melody—which latter fact is discovered only by most careful attention. Plain, simple and stereotyped as his song appears, marked variations are introduced in the course of it. The whippoorwill uses nearly all the intervals in the natural scale, even the octave. I have never detected a chromatic tone. Perhaps the favorite song-form is this:

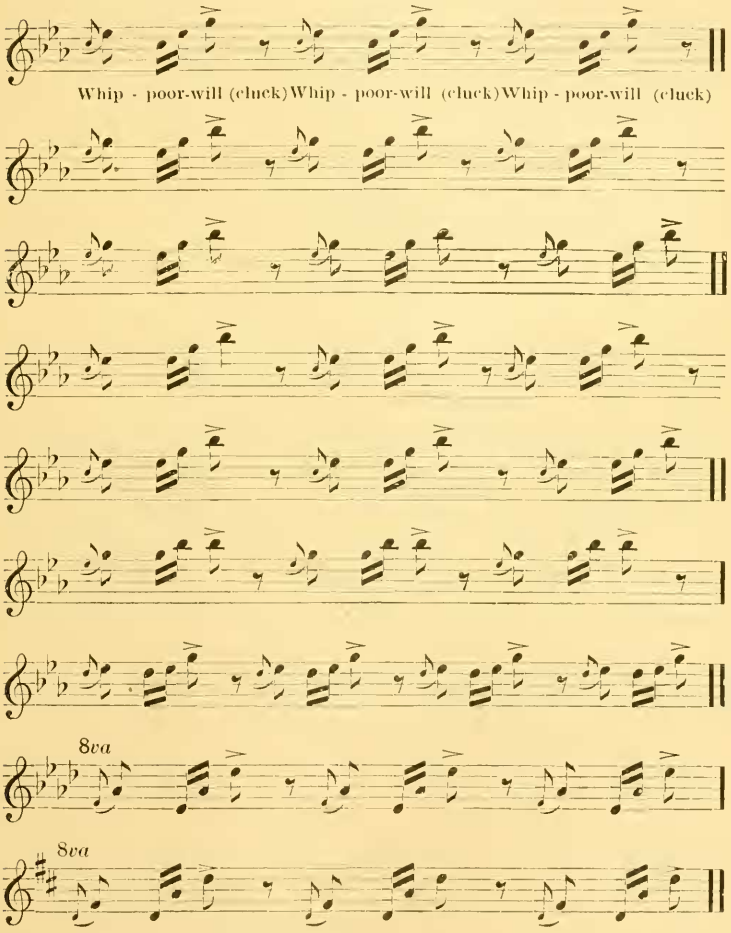


An eccentric part of the Whippoorwill's musical performance is the introduction of a '*cluck*' immediately after each '*whip-poor-will*'; so that the song is a regular, unbroken, rhythmical chain from beginning to end. One must be near the singer to hear the '*cluck*'; otherwise he will mark a rest in its place.

This bird does not stand erect with head up like the Robin when he sings, but stoops slightly, puts out the wings a little and keeps them in a rapid tremor throughout the entire song. Wilson decided that it required a second of time for the delivery of each '*whip-poor-will.*' "When two or more males meet," he adds, "their *whip-poor-will* altercations become much more rapid and incessant, as if each were straining to overpower or silence the other." These altercations are sometimes very amusing. Three Whippoorwills, two males and a female, indulged in them for several evenings one season, in my garden. They came just at dark, and very soon a spirited contest began. Frequently they flew directly upward, one at a time. Occasionally one flew down into the path near me, put out his wings, opened his big mouth, and hissed like a goose disturbed in the dark. But, the most peculiar, the astonishing feature of the contention was the *finale.* Toward the close of the trial of speed and power, the unwieldy name was dropped, and they rattled on freely with the same rhythm that the name would have required, alternating in their rushing triplets, going faster and faster, louder and louder, to the end.



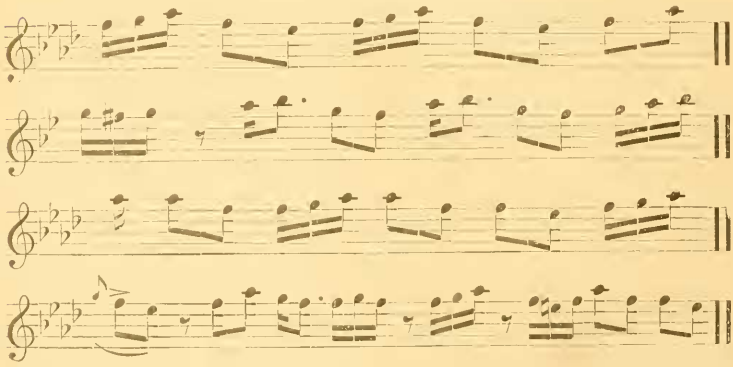
Various melodic forms:



SCARLET TANAGER.

This Tanager, the Baltimore Oriole's rival in beauty, is the less active, the less vigorous charmer of the two, and has less vocal power; but it would be difficult to imagine a more pleasing and delicate exhibition of a bird to both eye and ear than that presented by this singer in scarlet and black, as he stands on the limb of some tall tree in the early sun, shining, and singing, high above the earth, his brief, plaintive, morning song. The Tanager's is an unobtrusive song, while the percussive, ringing tones of the Oriole compel attention. In the spring of 1888 a beautiful singer greeted me one summer morning from the top of a tall oak near the house. He paid frequent visits to the same tree-top during the entire season, and sang the same song, beginning and ending with the same tones:

Still, like other birds, he had his variations:



These were all June songs, the last two being sung late in the afternoon.

Though the singer's home was in the near woods, we did not discover the nest of his mate. There came a time of silence, and an absence of flaming plumage, and finally a family of Tanagers —undoubtedly ours—male and female and three unfinished young

Tanagers of a neutral, olive tint, were about our grounds in the last days of August, evidently preparing to leave for their home in the tropics. The husband and father had doffed both his 'singing-robe' and his garment of scarlet, and wore in silence a traveling-dress of mixed pea-green and willow-yellow. More desirous than ever to avoid notice, there was about him a most captivating air of quietness and modesty.

ON THE WEST INDIAN SPECIES OF THE GENUS *CERTHIOLA* OR *CŒREBA*.*

BY CHARLES B. CORY.

GENUS Cœreba VIEILLOT.

Cœreba VIEILLOT, Ois. Am. Sept. I, 1807, p. 70. Type, *C. flaveola* Linn.

A. Throat ash color or ashy white; large, white wing-spot on quills extending beyond primary coverts.

Cœreba bahamensis (*Reich.*).

Certhia bahamensis BRISS. Orn. III, p. 620 (1760).
Certhiola bahamensis REICH. Handb. I, p. 253 (1853).—CORY, Birds Bahama Islands, p. 76 (1880); *id.* Birds West Indies, p. 61 (1889).
Certhiola bairdii CAB. J. f. O. 1865, p. 412.
Cœreba bahamensis RIDGW. Man. N. A. Birds, p. 590 (1887).
Throat ashy white; ash white on abdomen.
HABITAT.—Bahama Islands (61).†

Cœreba sharpei (*Cory*).

Certhiola sharpei CORY, Auk, III, pp. 497, 501 (1886).—RIDGW. Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. p. 574 (1887).
Throat more ashy than in *bahamensis;* belly pale yellow or yellowish white.
HABITAT.—Grand Cayman (36), Little Cayman (19), and Cayman Brac (13).

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*According to Mr. Ridgway (Manual of N. Am. Birds, p. 590 (1887), *Cœreba* must be used for this genus.

†The numbers of specimens examined are given after the names of the islands on which the species occur.